The Reconstructionist

Vol. XIII. January 23, 1948 Shebat 12, 5708 No 19

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the Reconstructionist

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EDITORIALS

UNFAIR EMBARGO

THE situation in Eretz Yisrael becomes more and more tense each day. The Arabs are organizing to carry out the threats they issued at the United Nations General Assembly meeting. Attacks on Jews in the cities, the colonies and on the highways mount as time goes on. Syrian Arabs have invaded the land, and have been repulsed only after severe fighting. In the meantime, the British continue to disarm the Jews, and to encourage by every act the revolt of the Arab leaders against the decision of the nations.

Our own government has not helped to clarify the situation. By imposing an embargo on the shipment of arms to the Middle East, it has, in fact, acted against its own avowed purpose. It played a leading part in bringing about acceptance of partition. It cannot, in justice to itself or to other nations, wash its hands of responsibility for effecting that solution of the Palestine problem which it urged the UN Assembly to adopt. The Arab attack on the Jews is not a race riot; it is an organized effort, aided and abetted by Arab states, to defeat by aggressive military action the purpose of the United Nations to which our own country also stands committed. An attitude of "neutrality" in the present conflict between Arabs and Jews in Palestine puts our government in the ambiguous position of being neutral as between those who would carry out the purpose of the United Nations, which is also the purpose of the United States, and those who have taken up arms to defeat that purpose. Arab aggression is therefore a hostile act not only against the Jews but against the world and, specifically, against the United States, which urged the policy of partition on the United Nations.

Indeed the embargo is, in effect, not a mere refusal to participate in the conflict in spite of the fact that in sympathy the United States is not neutral but committed in favor of Jewish statehood; the embargo is a direct assistance to the forces that are trying violently to defeat the United Nations and United States policy. During the war the Arab states were amply supplied with British and American arms for use in fighting the Axis Powers. They are using these arms now in aggressive action against the embryonic Jewish state which the United Nations has declared shall be brought into being. The Mandatory power has refused to make any distinction between the Jewish forces that are defending and the Arab forces that are attacking the implementation of the United Nations plan. Indeed, it is doing all in its power to disarm Haganah, which it regards as "illegal," and to leave the Jewish people at the mercy of the Arab armies which are

equipped and trained by the Arabian satellite states of the British Empire.

The self-contradictory policy of the embargo, which arms criminals and disarms the innocent, can hardly command the respect of those directly involved. Are people who feel themselves trapped and betrayed expected to do nothing about it? Is it not inevitable that some of them would place the saving of human lives above conformity with a manifestly unfair, though legal, embargo? If the purpose of that embargo is to reduce the area of conflict, it is clearly ineffective. Its only possible effect must be to encourage aggression by announcing to the world that the UN is impotent, that the Great Powers will not apply sanctions to states which openly undertake to defeat UN policy by violence. The embargo is an act of appeasement. Like all appeasement of international crime it makes not for peace but for war.

The warfare in Palestine cannot be stopped by ignoring it. The nations are again called upon to make a crucial decision with regard to Palestine and to make it promptly. The partition plan, though it contemplated a United Nations police force to help maintain order between the time that the Mandatory power surrendered that task and the time that the Jewish and Arab states might come into being, expected the Mandatory power to maintain the peace until the UN Commission could take over authority. It did not count on Britain's insisting on remaining in authority while *not discharging its responsibility to maintain order* and to protect the Jewish population from Arab aggression.

The United Nations is therefore called upon by the present situation to assert its will to carry out partition by the following acts:

(1) It must call on the Arab states to desist, under penalty of the application of sanctions in accordance with the UN Charter, from aiding the Palestinian Arabs by supplying men or equipment.

(2) It must recognize the right of the Yishuv, to defend itself and must enable it to do so. This means prohibiting the Mandatory power from disarming Haganah and permitting the Agency to purchase arms. It also means prohibiting the sale of arms to the Arab states as long as the conflict in Palestine continues.

(3) It must provide for an adequate international force during the transition period and until the country is pacified, so that the efforts of loyal Jews and Arabs can be concentrated on the constructive tasks of setting up their respective states and need not be dissipated in military action.

Anything less than this would endanger the success of the partition plan on which not only the hopes of the Jewish people, but the hopes of the world for peace in the Near East depend.

THE AMERICAN HALUTZ AS EMISSARY

THE encouragement of a *halutz* movement from America is today a part of American Zionist policy. That is as it should be. The economic expansion of the Yishuv with the opening up of Eretz Yisrael to mass immigration requires the services of workers with specialized skills. Because of American facilities for technical education, American Jewry can supply more of such workers than can other countries. Eretz Yisrael can also use the service of young men and women without specialized knowledge, but with health of body and mind beyond what can be expected of those who carry the physical and mental scars of concentration camp experiences. Some of these *olim* (pilgrims) from America may want to settle per-

manently in Eretz Yisrael. Others may give a year or two of national service to the new Jewish state and then return to resume their careers in America.

These young people will carry a great responsibility on their shoulders. They are, in effect, American Jewry's *shelihim* (emissaries) to Eretz Yisrael. On their conduct, more than on anything that other American Zionists can say or do, will depend the establishment of a much-needed better understanding between the Yishuv and the American Diaspora. The recognition of this responsibility should find expression in the preparatory training that our American *halutzim* receive in their *haksharah* camps.

That training should be directed to two ends: (1) to enable the American *halutz* to adjust himself to conditions of life in Eretz Yisrael; (2) to qualify him to bring to Eretz Yisrael the values of his American experience of which the Yishuv stands in need.

The first of these objectives has, more or less, been provided for in the training given on the *haksharah* farms, although, in at least one respect, that training has not been adequate, namely, in respect to language instruction. Most American *halutzim* are not sufficiently at home in the use of the Hebrew language. Their linguistic deficiency puts them at a cultural disadvantage in their relations with the native Palestinians and even with Jewish immigrants from most European countries. This is not only a personal handicap but a detriment to their exerting a constructive influence on communal life. In other respects, such as indoctrination in the social idealism of the Yishuv and training for the work they will be expected to do in Eretz Yisrael, their preparatory education is being taken care of.

But the objective of qualifying the American *halutz* to be the *shaliah* of the American Jewish community to Eretz Yisrael is almost totally neglected. This calls for education in a philosophy of Zionism that reckons with the experiences and needs of American Jewry. Three principles need to be stressed.

The first of these principles is the unity and indivisibility of all Israel. That would seem to be axiomatic. But there is a disposition on the part of many Jews in Eretz Yisrael to regard the Diaspora as nothing but a source of potential immigrants and of funds for the development of the country. From certain segments of the Yishuv has come the theory that only the Jews of Eretz Yisrael and the DP's who are destined to settle in it constitute the "Hebrew nation," and that other Jews are not any longer a part of the Jewish people but merely adherents of a religious cult designated as Judaism. Such a division runs counter to the whole of Jewish tradition and to the spiritual and practical interests of all Jewry, including the Jews of Eretz Yisrael. A concern for the continuity and integrity of Jewish life must be implanted in the *olim* from America. The problem of how both the homeland and the Diaspora can benefit by an interchange of personnel and of cultural products must be discussed in all *haksharah* centers.

The second principle is that of democracy. This involves (1) submission to the will of the majority in matters of common concern which call for decision, and (2) respect for the rights of minorities in all matter of conscience that do not call for decisive action by the community as a whole. In both aspects of the democratic ideal, certain elements of the Yishuv are sadly deficient. The secession of the dissident groups, the Irgunists and the Sternists, from the authority of the Agency and the Vaad Leumi manifests a subversion of the democratic principle of

majority rule. The attempts by Agudist elements and other Jewish "clerical" parties to impose upon the Yishuv the authoritarian control of the Orthodox rabbinate, especially in all matters affecting religious ritual and personal status, is subversive of the democratic spirit of minority rights and freedom of conscience. In the training for *halutziut,* the problem of applying American democratic principles to the specific conditions of life in Eretz Yisrael should be studied and discussed.

The third principle is the recognition of the role of religion in Jewish life. The bond that links Diaspora Jewry with Eretz Yisrael is primarily a spiritual one. The homeland can do little to increase the economic prosperity or political security of Jews in America. It can, however, immeasurably enhance the morale of American Jewry by stressing the religious values that find expression in Jewish civilization.

But a prerequisite to stressing the importance of the role of religion is an adequate conception of what constitutes religion. Such a conception is largely lacking today in Eretz Yisrael. Religion is identified wholly with the supernaturalist, Orthodox version of what constitutes Jewish religion. The acceptance of that conception of religion as the only authentic one has led to a widespread rejection of the Jewish religious tradition by modernist Jews and the espousal of atheism as the only alternative. Religion should be conceived as that aspect of a civilization which represents the people's evaluation of its own way of life, its sense of direction and purpose, of the worth of its existence to itself and to others. It is, so to speak, the collective personality of the people as a responsible moral agent, its conscience that recognizes the authority of the moral law, and sees in it a manifestation of divine purpose.

The recognition of such a conception of religion is necessary to bridge the gap between the secularist culture of our *kibbutzim* on the one hand, and the legalistic and mystical pietism of the "old Yishuv" and more recent additions to the ranks of Orthodoxy on the other. That gap is today a serious obstacle to the establishment of a spiritually united Yishuv. It is a chasm which cannot be bridged by mere expedient compromises; it must be bridged by a long range educational movement. American Jewry, having lived in an atmosphere of religious freedom, is far removed from the intransigent clericalism and atheistic anti-clericalism of the European countries which is reflected in the sharp division between the extreme views of the Orthodox and the secularists of the Yishuv. American Jewry has developed a respectful tolerance of differences in religious outlook. It is, therefore, in a position to help initiate a movement for clarifying the role of religion in Jewish life in Eretz Yisrael by broadening the conception of what is meant by religion. But it can do so only if it is given a hearing. And it can get a hearing only through those American Jews who come to Eretz Yisrael to help in its upbuilding. Our American *halutzim* should therefore be made aware of the problem and oriented to it even before they leave American soil.

"JEWISH" BOOKS AND MOVIES

THE increasing proportion of popular novels and motion pictures dealing with "Catholic," "Protestant" and "Jewish" subjects is a matter of common note. Whatever the reasons may be—whether it is the result of a genuine deepening of interest in things spiritual or of effective promotional

pressure by church groups or of a combination of the two—the fact itself is undeniable. The cynical materialism of the twenties and the militantly secular "social consciousness" of the thirties have both given way to a new temper sufficiently widespread to find reflection in the list of best sellers and the output of Hollywood. Perhaps, after all, war and post-war crisis have done something to shake our habitual self-assurance and bring us to a realization that human destiny may have a meaning beyond material power and technological achievement. We need not take these popular novels and movies too seriously as works of art to appreciate their significance as indications of the new temper of our time.

But there is an aspect of the matter that deserves closer attention on the part of those of us who are interested in the quality of Jewish life in America, and that is the striking difference in the character of the books and motion pictures that come to the American people with a Catholic or Protestant message, on the one hand, and those that deal with Jewish subjects, on the other. Books like *The Song of Bernadette* or *The Robe,* movies like *The Fugitive* or *Going My Way,* bring to the American people, however crudely and defectively, an affirmative word of faith, a positive message underscoring the unique values of religion. And the books and movies dealing with "Jewish" themes? What do they have to say to the American people? What do they suggest to be the things with which American Jews are primarily concerned and which the Jewish tradition might contribute to the spiritual regeneration of our time?

If we are to go by such best-selling novels and popular movies as *Gentleman's Agreement, Crossfire* and their like, the only conclusion we can draw is that what the Jews have to say is entirely negative and can be reduced to one sentence: Jews are really just like all other people, they have nothing special to say or exemplify in their way of life; in fact, it is the strategy of anti-Semitism to pretend that there is something "different" about Jews in order to be able to exploit this alleged difference for its sinister purposes. Whatever else there may be in these books or pictures, no one can deny that this is their underlying theme.

Far be it from us to underrate the agonizing urgency of the problems of anti-Semitism and bigotry in the world of today, our own United States included. But does the effort at mere survival exhaust all our energies and leave us with no resources for a positive spiritual affirmation? It never used to be that way with Jews. Jews have suffered shattering calamities repeatedly through the centuries and have fought for survival with courage and tenacity; but they have always had something to say beyond the cry for survival, some positive affirmation in terms of which survival itself took on a new significance. Why is there so little of this spirit in the "Jewish" books and plays being produced today?

Take the movie, *The Fugitive,* adapted from a novel by Graham Greene. It tells the story of the persecutions undergone by the Church in Mexico, but it tells it in such a way as to constitute also an impressive statement of the transcendent importance of religion in the life of man. No one seeing the picture is likely to remain totally unaffected by this latter aspect of it.

Are there no such themes for those who write "Jewish" novels or make "Jewish" motion pictures to draw upon? To ask the question is to answer it. The record of Jewish life is replete with dramatic, profoundly moving incidents exemplify-

ing Israel's never-ending witness to the Eternal for the sanctification of the Name. Indeed, what is Jewish history, what is even contemporary Jewish existence in many of its phases, but one long tale of spiritual heroism above suffering and persecution to affirm those ideals and values for which Judaism has stood through the ages? But where is all this reflected in present-day writing about Jews?

The failure is especially deplorable because not only is all this material available for creative treatment but it is all ready to hand, carefully selected and prepared. Every Sunday for the past three years, the "Eternal Light" program, sponsored by the Jewish Theological Seminary, has been broadcasting half-hour radio sketches of Jewish life and history. These dramatizations, written by Morton Wishengrad, are entirely free from the negativism and narrowness to which we have alluded. In its totality, the program is a clear, courageous presentation of the underlying realities and values of Jewish existence and it has made a profound impression upon all those who have listened to it. But apparently Hollywood, for all its new-found pretensions to "seriousness," has not yet discovered this side of Jewish life. Or perhaps a little organized "pressuring" is necessary to get Hollywood to take notice of anything?

However that may be, the fact remains that the picture one gets from current "Jewish" books and movies is one that largely falsifies the real meaning of Jewish existence. Surely the Jew of today has something more to say, *as Jew,* than that anti-Semitism is irrational and bigotry undemocratic. Is it really so unreasonable to expect the essential values of Jewish life to find expression in works claiming to present the Jew to the world?

REALITIES AND VALUES

THE AMERICAN COUNCIL FOR Judaism is concerned with the relations of "Americans of Jewish faith" to the new Jewish state.

Our own position is simple. We believe in the peoplehood of Israel and are interested in the future Jewish state as a necessary instrument for furthering Jewish civilization. We were interested in the Yishuv under the Mandate, though we owed no allegiance to the Mandatory government, and shall continue to be interested in the Yishuv when it is part of a self-governing state.

But we should like to ask a few questions of the American Council for Judaism:

1. Whom do they consider their "co-religionists?" Is the Jew who prays for the coming of the Messiah, for the rebuilding of the Temple in Jerusalem and the restoration of the sacrificial cult, the Aaronide priesthood and the Davidic dynasty a co-religionist of theirs? Would the faith of such a Jew be consistent with Americanism? Or is only the faith of the American Council for Judaism and similar old-line Reform Jews in America and elsewhere to be regarded as the Jewish faith?

2. Is it legitimate for American Jews to interest themselves actively in the economic rehabilitation of Jewry in other countries?

3. Is it generally legitimate for Americans to agitate for the freedom and independence of colonial peoples of the world and only illegitimate when the Americans who agitate are Jewish and the colonials seeking freedom and independence are the Jews of Eretz Yisrael?

▼

SOMETHING NEW IN ANTI-Defamation work is worthy of note. Believing that an ounce of prevention is

worth a ton of cure, the Anti-Defamation League of the B'nai B'rith has launched an interesting project through the Christian Friends of ADL, an organization of more than 9,000 ministers and priests.

It has prepared for them a pamphlet descriptive of the Jewish holidays for use in the education of Christian children. The pamphlet is beautifully illustrated and of attractive format. The text explains the significance of all of the holidays and of their various characteristic rites and symbols in simple and interesting language.

The effect on the child is to take away the feeling that Jewish rites are queer and barbaric. The awareness that Gentiles commonly react scornfully to these rites has in the past led to the erroneous policy of trying to win Gentile favor by sacrificing Jewishness. The new policy, by associating Jewish ritual with the universal values that it symbolically expresses, evokes in the Christian child a respect for these rites and thus saves the self-respect of the Jewish child and his loyalty to Judaism.

When what is distinctively Jewish is made intelligible and interesting to the Christian child, it no longer generates xenophobia.

▼

THERE IS POETIC JUSTICE IN the news that the land of the former German colony, Sarona, once a seat of Nazi intrigue, has been purchased from the Palestine government by the Jewish National Fund and the city of Tel Aviv and will be developed as an urban settlement for surviving victims of Nazi atrocities.

A tract of 200 dunams of land in this purchase are to be developed in commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of American Zionism and will be called ZOA Golden Jubilee Colony. The plan calls for a housing project to accommodate 2,000 new settlers, tourist hotels, and educational and recreational facilities along American lines. The streets will be named after distinguished Americans and prominent Zionists.

Plans for the development of the remainder of the 4,000 acre tract will be announced later.

▼

THE *Churchman* FOR JANUARY 1, 1948 contains a letter to the editor by Charles William Campbell urging certain revisions in the Episcopalian Book of Common Prayer. We believe that our readers, particularly those who have followed the controversies about the Sabbath Prayer Book published by the Jewish Reconstructionist Foundation, will be interested in the following brief excerpts from the letter:

"It must tax the faith of cultured Episcopalians to read that 'dearth and famine' are due to sin (sometimes they are, of course); that God afflicts us with 'immoderate rains' and that on the other hand in time of drouth a prayer for rain is provided . . . that there will be a 'General Resurrection' at the last day when 'the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God.'"

Evidently with some Christians, as with us Reconstructionists, there is the demand for revising the traditional ritual, however time-honored and poetic be its text,

(*Continued on Page* 24)

NOTICE

The publication of the second of Dr. Dinin's articles on Jewish education, "Jewish Education Faces the Future," which was scheduled to appear in this issue had to be deferred. It will, however, appear in the following issue.

—Editors

An Island in the Sea

By SAMUEL C. KOHS

OFF the California coast there is a small island which by its geographical location, its structure and its relation to the land mass of the United States, is assumed to exercise tremendous influence over climate, earthquakes and the future of this continent.

A parallel to this in American Jewish life is offered by a vital organization generally invisible to the Jewish observer —the Yiddish Scientific Institute (YIVO). It is a small island, but exerts a great influence on the spiritual climate of our Jewish life.

At the moment, the attention and the efforts of American Jewry are concentrated upon saving human lives. Although we speak glibly of the fact that "we do not live by bread alone," it is sometimes difficult to translate this fundamental truth into action. YIVO has made a notable contribution to the achievement of that difficult goal.

The Research and Publication Program of YIVO

During the past five years, YIVO has been supplying the United States Government and the World Commission prosecuting Nazi criminals with a wealth of documentary information of the utmost value. During the same period, YIVO has been supplying essential material—books, printing type, periodicals, and other resources—to help rebuild the cultural life of the scattered Jewish communities of Europe. Its influence upon the reconstruction of European Jewish life beyond the subsistence level is incalculable.

Here in this country, it continues to serve as the outstanding national Jewish organization gathering information about Jews from all over the world,—demographic, historical and all other categories—far beyond anything which any other national Jewish organization is doing. Among its recent publications are those of Max Weinreich: "Hitler's Professors: The Part of Scholarship in Germany's Crimes Against the Jewish People;" the second volume of "The History of the Jews in Warsaw" by Jacob Shatzky, (the third volume is ready for the press); "The YIVO Annual of Jewish Social Science," Volume II; an English-Yiddish Volume of Selected Essays and Short Stories of Y. L. Peretz. Ready for early publication are a number of volumes which include a "Thesaurus of the Yiddish Language" and a "History of the Jews in California up to 1880" by Rudolf Glanz.

The YIVO Archives and Library

It is of interest to note that the YIVO archives and library have, perhaps, the largest collection of source materials on the First Zionist Congress, which met in Basle, Switzerland in 1897, and data on the Jewish Labor Organization ("Bund"), both of which are celebrating fifty years of important social thought and action. Research organizations and departments of colleges and universities continually turn to the YIVO archives for basic information and source materials on Jewish life throughout the world.

Among these archives is the diary of Theodor Herzl, which is a most valuable document in the field of the science of Judaism. Other diaries, such as those of Zelig Kalmanovitch and of Herman Kruk, both of whom lived through the

dark days of the Nazi destruction of the Vilna Jewish community, are tremendously valuable source materials on the impact of that catastrophe upon Jewish personality. These materials provide interesting data on the reservoirs from which European Jewry drew its inspiration and its faith to survive as it has.

The Annual Conference and Exhibition

One could go on and enumerate, paragraph after paragraph, other priceless treasures available in the YIVO archives. Unfortunately, the demands upon American Jewry to provide funds for Jewish rescue work are so great as to make it forget its important "island in the sea." But if we have any regard for the Jewish future throughout the world, we cannot permit this important agency to be starved out of existence. It is imperative that every Jew do all within his power to make local communities recognize their responsibility to keep this valuable organization alive. For the benefit of Jewry overseas as well as for the good it can accomplish in helping to reorient American Jewry, YIVO must be permitted to continue functioning in these trying days.

This month the Yiddish Scientific Institute holds its annual conference. A very important list of topics for discussion has been arranged. In that connection, a YIVO exhibition on Jewish children in Europe after World War II is being planned for the period from January 19th to 30th, 1948.

The exhibition will comprise drawings, paintings, sketches, and other pictorial efforts of the children; bulletins, magazines and newspapers published by the children; textbooks, workbooks, and similar materials—all recently arrived from Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Poland, Rumania, and other European countries.

Although it is difficult to weigh the relative importance of bread versus learning, one can say that bread without learning is purposeless and learning without bread is impossible. Let us hope that American Jewry will be able to provide the essential balance to assure the survival of the Jew, not alone in body but also in spirit.

Boomerang

By MILTON B. PERLMAN

IT is a very simple matter to nod assent, to join the bandwagon when great names praise ideas expressed by others. Our hurried complex living today, is the cause of our frequently hurried, non-analytical reading. More than four years ago, an interesting pamphlet was issued by the Public Affairs Committee. It was recommended by "American Unity," a very well accepted magazine issued by the Council Against Intolerance in America. It was widely circulated by the United States Army among our soldiers in war areas. Excerpts of it, unfortunately, were used even by the Jewish Education Committee in pamphlets issued to its constituent Hebrew Schools. It was used also in many Public Schools in New York City and elsewhere throughout the United States.

I refer to "Races of Mankind" written by Prof. Ruth Benedict and Dr. Gene Weltfish of the Department of Anthropology, Columbia University.

When I read the pamphlet, I found it an excellent plea for an understanding of the abject situation into which unthink-

ing prejudiced mankind had plunged the Negro. The material was of great value in its attempt to eradicate this baseless prejudice. But, alas, certain other items were disturbing to me because of their unscientific statements, because of the incorrect attitude which they expressed as fact, in relation to the Jew.

I spoke to the Jewish educational leader who had used the excerpts. But he admitted he had not read the items carefully enough to realize the implications I had emphasized. I wrote to a leading rabbi. He did not find the matter important enough to act upon. I conferred with a leading Zionist. He felt that war hysteria was so prevalent that Jewish problems were best soft-pedalled then. Very few others would recognize the difficulties I was alluding to. The leading educator's attitude seemed to prove the point. I wrote to a Jewish columnist of one of our New York newspapers. The issue at stake at the time did not seem dramatic enough to be highlighted by him.

On Wednesday, November 26, 1947, in the debates at the United Nations Assembly, those paragraphs in "Races of Mankind" carried weight. The delegate from Syria quoted the very items to which I had been objecting, as proof that even prominent Jewish anthropologists realized that Jews were "merely those who practised the Jewish religion." They were not a nation, he quoted. To be sure, his remarks did not have enough influence to prevent the favorable decision for partition of Palestine, yet that pamphlet's aspersions against the Jew still offer world-wide opportunity for continued error, baseless slur, and unlimited difficulty.

We must read carefully what we appear ready to approve, or else we shall continue to suffer the boomerang.

I quote below excerpts of my letter of 1943 which discussd the details of the objectionable comments in "Races of Mankind."

> Although the pamphlet has many worthwhile pages, I think the following items are likely to cause inaccurate thinking by uninformed, uncritical readers, Jews and Gentiles alike.
>
> Page 11.—"Aryans, Jews, Italians are not races. . . . Jews are people who practise the Jewish religion. . . . Wherever Jews are persecuted or discriminated against, they cling to their old ways and keep apart from the rest of the population and develop so-called 'Jewish' traits; they disappear under conditions where assimilation is easy."
>
> I think the implication, the slur, in the words "old ways," and "Jewish traits," is very objectionable. Although I agree that the Jews are not a race, I must insist that Jews are not merely those who practice the Jewish religion. It is true that the Jewish people and the Jewish religion are inseparable. Yet are the Hebrew language and its prophetic and modern literature to be completely ignored? Is the pioneer spirit of the *halutzim* who reached Palestine to be labeled a "'Jewish trait' that will disappear where assimilation is easy?" Are the contributions to health, science, education, art, and music, to be ignored and forgotten, or will even anthropologists acknowledge them as contributions to civilization's progress? And will they therefore realize that Judaism is a civilization and not merely a religion?
>
> Page 12.—"Italians are a nationality. . . . The Germans, the Russians and all other nations of Europe are nations, not races. They are bound together . . . by their national pride, their love of their farms, their local customs, their language, and the like." According to the implication, the Jews are devoid of such pride and ties, but merely have "Jewish traits" which "disappear where assimilation is easy."
>
> Have the authors not heard of the agricultural miracles performed in Palestine in the past 25 years?
>
> What has kept the Jewish people alive these two thousand years if not their common language, their common mores practised the world over, and now taking on local vigor, intensification, and revivification in Palestine? I should be very happy to feel that you are taking steps to rectify the erroneous effect this article may be making upon impressionable youth and upon uninformed adults who know little about Jewish Zionist aspirations, and efforts all over the world to reestablish the

Jewish Homeland. Above all, if the pamphlet seeks to prove a scientific fact that Jews are not a race, it should do so scientifically without misstatement and without implications that develop anti-Semitism rather than minimize it."

"Races of Mankind" can still be of value in eradicating baseless prejudice. It can still serve as a foundation for better understanding among peoples. But its errors of fact, and its unjust implications about the Jews should be corrected, and eliminated from future issues.

Panel Discussion—The Future of the American Jew

"THE Future of the American Jew," the latest book by Mordecai M. Kaplan, Chairman of the editorial board of *The Reconstructionist,* was placed "on trial" in an "Author Meets the Critics Program" on Sunday evening, January 4, 1948, at the Meeting House of the Society for the Advancement of Judaism, New York City. The critics who met the author to discuss the book were: Dr. Mortimer J. Cohen, rabbi of Congregation Beth Shalom, Philadelphia, and author of "Pathways Through the Bible"; Dr. Emanuel Gamoran, Director of the Department of Education of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations; and Dr. David Petegorsky, Executive Director of the American Jewish Congress. Dr. Ira Eisenstein, leader of the Society for the Advancement of Judaism, acted as moderator. An audience that filled the meeting house to capacity participated in the second half of the panel.

The interest which the publication of the book aroused was evidenced not only by the large crowd which filled the auditorium and the many people who had to be turned away for lack of space, but also by the composition and the spirit of the audience. The crowd came to hear and to question. They represented different points of view. They included the expert writer, the experienced theologian, the social worker, the educator, the student, the business man and the professional worker—all of whom are vitally concerned about the future as it affects American Jewry. Particularly significant was the overwhelming proportion of young men and women, to whom the future belongs, and who will have to contribute their share in shaping it.

The panel discussion concerning the book revolved around three main themes: The Future Status of the Jew in America, presented by Dr. Petegorsky; The Future of Jewish Religion in America, discussed by Dr. Cohen and The Future of Jewish Education in America, considered by Dr. Gamoran.

Jewish Status in America

Dr. Petegorsky noted that Dr. Kaplan's book refuted the assumption that the status of American Jews depends principally upon the attitude of the non-Jewish community. The future Jewish status in the United States will be greatly affected by the following:

1. *The Emergence of the Jewish State in Palestine.*

While this will bring about normalization of the Jewish people as a people it will underscore the difference between peoplehood and statehood. It will give to American Jews inner security, so that the fear which many Jews have had of identifying themselves with Jewish life will be lessened.

2. *The Fate of Progressive Democracy in the United States.*

Minority groups can thrive, and indeed exist, only in a progressive society. Reaction, conversely, jeopardizes the status and security of all groups.

3. *The Political and Economic Status of Jews Overseas.*

No matter how the principle may be denied, this is one world, especially for the Jews. Whatever affects the Jewish people anywhere affects them everywhere.

4. *Intelligent Jewish Community Organization in America.*

We wish to deepen and enrich the cultural and spiritual content of Jewish life. We wish to extend Jewish community influence to those who are not yet subject to this influence. These objectives can be accomplished only if there is intelligent Jewish community organization, all inclusive in scope, representative in character and democratic in procedure.

5. *The Future Development of Cultural Pluralism.*

America is made of many groups, each one the bearer of a distinct cultural heritage, each of which merges into the whole.

6. *The Status of Civil Rights in America.*

It is impossible to separate the Jewish group from other minorities in this country. Civil rights must be equal for all groups, and here the Jewish group has the opportunity to render significant and creative leadership.

7. *The Degree of Assimilation, Intermarriage and Escape from Jewish Identification.*

The extent to which we can halt these tendencies depends, in large measure, upon making Jewish life in America purposeful, dignified and worthwhile. The extension of progressive democracy will also lessen the tendencies toward escape since the disabilities attendant upon being Jewish will decrease. Furthermore, the establishment of the Jewish state will be reflected in the attitude of the non-Jewish community in America toward its Jewish fellow citizens and in the attitude of the Jew toward himself.

The Future of Jewish Religion in America

Dr. Cohen, in analyzing the chapters in the book dealing with religion, mentioned two factors upon which Dr. Kaplan based his entire atttude toward the development of Jewish religion in America. The first element was the hospitality of the American scene. Judaism, being a religious civilization, Dr. Kaplan asserts, can be integrated into American living, just as is Chritianity, also a religious civilization. The more significant the Jewish way of life becomes for the individual Jew, the more he can make his life count in the civilization of America. Dr. Cohen raised, however, the important question with which the book did not deal: the possibility of a change in American civilization. What would happen should American civilization become inhospitable toward cultural pluralism or toward religious pluralism? The present attacks on the doctrine of separation of church and state and the growing nationalistic movement in the United States may make it much harder to integrate Judaism within the dominant civilization. Will it be possible in an inhospitable United States to maintain ourselves either as a religion or as a people?

The second factor considered by Dr. Kaplan is the need for Judaism to change in order to meet the intellectual challenge of our time. We live in a world that is totally different from that existing before the latter half of the seventeenth century. The world outlook has

changed, science has advanced, new social forms have appeared, psychological factors must be taken into account. Do we have the vitality to change the form of our religion so that it will be able to answer the challenge of a changed and changing world? Dr. Kaplan's book indicates that it must be done and, also, how it can be done.

However, to advocate, as does Dr. Kaplan, spiritual religion as against supernatural religion needs the allegiance of the "tough minded." The "tender minded" will continue to be moored to the comfortable old ways where authoritarianism, revelation and miracle in religion are all unquestioned. But the "tough minded" can move into uncharted seas. In the chapters on religion contained in the book, we have a blueprint of the hitherto uncharted seas of the future.

The Future of Jewish Education

Dr. Gamoran then began an examination of the status of Jewish education in the future. He declared that Jewish education is bound up with a philosophy of Jewish life. In Dr. Kaplan's book, he stated, a summary of such a philosophy can be found. There it is indicated that Eretz Yisrael is the nucleus of Jewish civilization. Thus, Jewish education in America must necessarily be directly influenced by whatever developments take place within the Jewish state.

Most of the controversy which has been agitating American Jewry centering around the Zionist movement is over. Now there is no adequate reason why American Jewry cannot unite in the areas of culture and religion. Many who look upon Judaism only as a religion fear the cultural elements in Judaism because they confuse them with the "red herring" of dual allegiance. There is no longer any basis for this fear, since an American Jew is a citizen of the United States and a Jew in the Jewish state is a citizen of that state.

Unity can be achieved in Jewish education and in Jewish religion, but both will have to be made meaningful. The opportunity exists now to enrich Jewish life in America and to develop real Jewish values. What differences will then remain to continue to agitate American Jews?

It was Dr. Gamoran's opinion that such differences would arise in the area of traditionalism versus the historical attitude. The traditionalist will accept only the authority of traditional theology; but this will not satisfy the modern Jew. These Jews will demand reinterpretation. We can make a beginning by taking the following steps:

1. Establishing a foundation school for children from five to eight years of age.
2. Establishing a three-day a week school as a minimum requirement of Jewish education.
3. Setting up a private day school for those who are ready to engage in intensive Jewish study.
4. Experimenting with Jewish education, on child, youth, and adult levels.

Dr. Kaplan in Reply

Dr. Kaplan followed Dr. Gamoran and thanked his "benevolent" critics both for reading the book and for putting aside pre-conceived notions in order to explore and to judge a piece of controversial writing.

In considering Dr. Petegorsky's remarks, Dr. Kaplan said that status is a burning question. We must know who we are, what is the nature of the group to which we belong, and what it means to be a Jew.

The question is particularly acute now that a part of our people will be granted nationhood. In the United States we must learn to know ourselves by a name which until now has been colorless—a people, bearers of a civilization, the Jewish civilization.

That which unites us as a group and differentiates us from other groups is a complete civilization. People who are united by a civilization constitute a people no matter where they live. And it is a fundamental truth that it is impossible for a people to be united through a civilization unless there is a nucleus of that civilization which will continue to create new values. That nucleus is the Jewish state.

We Jews have created a new sociological form which it is to be hoped the United Nations will one day recognize. It is a concept of the social entity. We speak of Judaism as a religious civilization because it connotes a way of life, the ultimate aim of which is self-realization or salvation. Judaism wishes to give to every Jew the opportunity to make the best of his life. We must learn to know ourselves and in trying to know ourselves we begin to know mankind. Thus we are compelled by destiny, through suffering and through thought, to work out a new formula for human organization. Israel is indivisible, and the fact that Israel is an indivisible unity makes Jewish religion Jewish. Similarly, each civilization must have the opportunity to bring out whatever religious and cultural values it has in order to achieve salvation for its individual members.

Religion

Dr. Kaplan said that he agreed with Dr. Cohen on the place of Jewish religion in America. It is true that the future of Jewish religion in America is based upon faith in American life. If there is to be a deterioration here, Dr. Kaplan asserted, he does not know what to say nor what can be done. But the way to live is to believe that life has meaning, that America has great ideals and that great ideals and ideas have developed within it. We must continue to try to develop the rich inherent qualities in America and the rich potentialities within the Jewish people. These qualities, such as justice, equality, human brotherhood, are deeply religious even though there is the tendency to call them secular. In developing the concept of spiritual religion we recognize that, as life goes on, greater potentialities emerge and that the Jewish people today, in its willingness to sacrifice, to think, to create, is greater than ever. Furthermore, we must allow for diversity even within the Jewish religion. There is something lacking in Jewish religion if no place can be found within it for men like Brandeis or Einstein, whose great spiritual qualities mark them as deeply religious men.

On Education

To achieve this new conception of Judaism calls for a new approach to Jewish education. It means to depart from the static traditional attitude and to adopt an evolutionary one. Within Judaism there is room for Orthodoxy, for Reform, for Conservatism, and for Humanism. Our problem, as bearers of a civilization, is to work out that overarching unity that will allow us to develop all those elements which we, as Jews, have in common. It is the purpose of Reconstructionism to bring regeneration to all elements in Jewish life. For that it should not be criticized as being "all things to all men."

For those who are satisfied with their religious affiliations and concepts, we have developed the over-all program in which we suggest the organization of Jewish communal life, the centrality of Eretz

Yisrael, the development of cultural, ethical, esthetic and artistic values. For those who are not satisfied with the present denominational approaches to Jewish religion, we have developed a religious outlook in terms of modern day experience and aspirations.

Reconstructionism, concluded Dr. Kaplan, seeks to revive Jewish life for all who want to remain Jews. We believe that only in this way can the Jewish people survive and individual Jews find salvation. To take advantage of every opportunity to realize the best potentialities in ourselves, to work upon the assumption that the world is so constituted as to give us a chance to make the best of our lives, this is to believe in God.

Questions and Participation by the Audience

Many fundamental questions touching the core of each presentation were addressed to one or more of the participants. As many of these questions were answered as time permitted. In order to give our readers the full benefit of the proceedings, we are making provision for a question and answer page in *The Reconstructionist* to answer some of the basic questions that were covered. We shall also endeavor, should space permit, to answer any questions about Reconstructionism which those who were unable to attend this outstanding panel forum wish to put to us.

THE EDITORS

Two Dances

By GRACE GOLDIN

I
HABDALAH

At the Procession of the Law
Shabbat, in a Shtibble,
The Spola Grandfather sang to God
As gaily as a fiddle.
By incantations in his voice
Heaven he beguiled;
Then he took the Torah in his arms
And carried it like a child.

At the third meal, the Feast of the Bride,
Shabbat, at dusk,
He strove mightily to divide
Kernel from husk,
An earthly from a heavenly crown,
Defiled, from the undefiled;
Sometimes, seeing his intent,
Heaven smiled;
And the Spola Grandfather rose and danced
Like a four year old child.

II
HORAH

Halutzah, dance! Dance till your head
Swings in a circle too;
Your arm is about your comrade's belt
You stamp your shoe by his shoe;
You dug all day and you'll dance all night
As free people do.
You spin like a child, your eyes go wild,
You sweat and do not care
For all the rimes of Kinnereth
Fly on your flying hair.
O, like a weed-fire in the wind
You whirl higher and higher;
The tireder you ought to be
The longer you will not tire—
But twelve o'clock—by twelve o'clock,
You burn down blue, like fire.

Random Thoughts

THE nations have a way with the Jews. It is that of being tormenting benefactors.

First they emancipate the Jews.

The emancipation turns out to be a ten-foot rope to a drowning man fifteen feet away.

Then they grant the Jews a state.

The state, which is a fifteen-foot rope, is no sooner thrown out to them than it is pulled back just enough to prevent them from grasping it.

* * *

Psalm 144 was originally a lusty battle song.

Jews, who still pray thrice daily, chant it mechanically in the gloaming of the Sabbath between the afternoon and the evening service.

Like using a battle axe to chop wood with.

* * *

Plutarch was the first to use the term "theologian."

In describing the oracle at Delphi he tells of the priestess, who, after having fallen into a trance, would utter some meaningless sounds, which were then translated into meaningful verse by "theologians."

Ever since then it has come to be applied to one who interprets a religious tradition which has ceased to have meaning for most people.

* * *

Our present deeds are determined by the past which is beyond our control and by the future which is within our control.

* * *

To be able to distinguish between a greater and a lesser evil is the beginning of goodness.

* * *

Other things being equal, it takes more courage to say "No" than to say "Yes."

* * *

Chanticleer thought that his crowing made the sun rise.

Came a morning when the sun rose before he thought of crowing.

Did he put an end to himself?

No. He was thenceforth satisfied with the role of announcing the dawn.

So why make a fuss when we discover that we are not chosen to bring the millennium?

Is not the role of announcing the millennium in the face of universal chaos good enough?

* * *

Perhaps if the prophets of doom had not kept on frightening mankind into believing that the world was about to come to an end, people might have heeded the warnings by the scientists in our day of the menace in the atomic weapon.

* * *

A people can live as long as it can reconstruct its life to meet changing conditions.

* * *

Historians with a nostalgia for the past usually indulge in retrospective utopianism.

* * *

The High Holidays have come to be observed by many of our people as a kind of *Yahrzeit* for the Judaism which died with their parents.

M. M. K.

Book Notes

THE UNITARY PATTERN OF JEWISH RELIGION

BASIC JUDAISM, by Milton Steinberg. Harcourt, Brace and Co., New York, 1947. ix + 172 pp. $2.50.

AS the preface states, "This is a book about the Jewish religion" and although the author, in the title of the book and elsewhere, uses the terms *Jewish religion* and *Judaism* as synonymous, he makes clear that Jewish religion is inseparable, except as an abstract concept, from the other, secular aspects of Jewish civilization: the peoplehood, land, language, laws, customs and arts of Israel.

The book attempts to describe the basic concepts, ideals and practices of Jewish religion. It takes cognizance of the different interpretations of the Jewish religious tradition, but stresses agreements rather than disagreements. Dr. Steinberg aims at and achieves objectivity in stating fairly religious opinions both of traditionalists and of modernists, but his objectivity is that of candor, not of aloofness. He makes no attempt to conceal his ardent love of the Judaism he is describing. Even in his description of attitudes of which he does not wholly approve, his treatment is understanding and sympathetic.

There are so many different and conflicting interpretations of Jewish religion that Jews and non-Jews alike may sometimes be disposed to question whether there is such a thing as Jewish religion in our day, whether the religious unity of our people has not completely disintegrated. "Basic Judaism" sets out to correct that impression. It shows that the religious attitudes which unite all Jews and distinguish Jewish religion from all other religions, including those that stem from Judaism, are much more significant and much more deep-seated than the religious issues that divide Jewry. It is precisely because our agreements are so fundamental that we commonly take them for granted, while our disagreements become the subject of endless disputation. It is a genuine service to Judaism to make Jews conscious of their common attitudes as well as of their dissensions, to "accentuate the positive" and "eliminate the negative" from our religious discussion. It is also a service to the cause of religious tolerance to help the Christian world understand what Jews see in their Judaism. This serves to disabuse at least those Christians who are well-meaning, of the notion that Judaism's rejection of Christianity arises from spiritual callousness, from an inherent insensitivity to spiritual values.

The task which the author undertook is no easy one. To trace a unitary pattern in all the diversities of Jewish religious thought past and present and to present that pattern in simple and readable form and within easy compass (for the value of the book would have been lost had it been extended into a ponderous tome) is much more difficult than the casual reader is likely to suspect. For the grace of the author's style makes the book easy to read, and the reader might imagine that it was correspondingly easy to write.

The author stresses agreement, unity and similarity in Jewish religious attitudes rather than differences, but the

differences are, in our day, too important to ignore. Nor, to do the author justice, does he ignore them. He is, however, compelled by his desire to bring out the unity in the Jewish diversity, to oversimplify the picture, to reduce its complexity by classifying all the various shades and nuances of Jewish religious opinion under two general heads of traditionalists and modernists. There are Jews, however, who are modernist in their theology and traditionalist in their attitudes to ritual and law, while others insist on operating with traditionalist theological notions, (such, for instance, as the chosenness of Israel), while being modernist in the liberties they allow themselves and others in respect to Jewish ritual and law.

We have the feeling, also, that, on many points, the divisions cut deeper than the author would have us believe. Though, for example, all religionists among Jews profess belief in God, the current conceptions of God among Jews are so divergent that many modernist conceptions look like atheism to the extreme traditionalists, while some traditionalist conceptions seem rank idolatry to many modernists. We fear that some of the unity which the author ascribes to Jewish religious attitudes is due to the use of common verbal symbols—such words for example as God, Torah, Israel—which, however, mean radically different concepts to different groups of Jews.

In the last analysis, the unity of Jewish religion is less a conceptual unity than a culturally organic one. Jewish religion is the religion of the Jewish people. It is the self-conscious quest of that people for salvation, for a way of life that shall make life for the Jew as a human being and as a member of Israel of permanent value. That is why Jewish groups who may differ in many opinions yet use the same symbols to express their divergent meanings. For those symbols are the natural idiom of communication between Jew and Jew in different parts of the world and in different eras of Jewish history. They thus express a unity of purpose and aim that transcends the diversities of opinion.

Dr. Steinberg senses this, but, it seems to us, does not sufficiently stress it. Yet precisely this involvement of Jewish religion in the organic unity of the Jewish people and its civilization is what makes *basic Judaism* basically Jewish. He names in his first chapter seven strands that together make up the pattern of basic Judaism:

"1. A doctrine concerning God, the universe, and man;
2. A morality of the individual and society;
3. A regimen of rite, custom and ceremony;
4. A body of law;
5. A sacred literature;
6. Institutions through which the foregoing find expression;
7. The people, Israel—out of which and about which the others are spun."

Note that the first six strands might apply equally well to many, if not all, other religions. But in every instance the content to which the terms refer would be differently experienced in Judaism, owing to the dependence of the other six on the seventh, central strand.

We believe therefore that it would have been simpler for the author to have mentioned that strand first and showed how all the others derive from it.

That approach would have an additional advantage. Whenever we base religion primarily on an abstract idea rather than on a vital experience, we tie it down to dogma and an authoritarian tradition and cannot validate it for those

who do not accept the same ideational premise to which we subscribe. Experiences may be differently accounted for and evaluated, but at least it is possible to communicate their substance because of the fundamental identity of basic human nature on which all religion must be built.

Nevertheless, these criticisms should not obscure the undeniable merit of the book. It affords a needed corrective for those who cannot see the forest of Jewish religion for the trees, who cannot discern its organic unity for the many fragmentary beliefs and practices by which it functions in their lives. "Basic Judaism," moreover, by the urbanity of its style as well as by its content, should contribute toward assuaging the acerbity with which religious issues in Judaism are so often discussed. We recommend its study to all who want to know what Jewish religion means to religious Jews.

EUGENE KOHN

ESSAYS ON THE HISTORY OF FRENCH JEWRY

LES JUIFS DE FRANCE, by Robert Anchel. J. B. Janin Editeur, Paris, 1946.

OF the French post-war publications dealing with Jewish history, Robert Anchel's *Les Juifs de France* is one of the most outstanding.

Robert Anchel, archivist of the *Archives Nationales,* was well prepared to write this long awaited book. His previous publications, particularly his brilliant and exhausting study on *Napoleon et les Juifs* revealed a highly qualified historian. When he published in 1938 a smashing and justified criticism on Leon Berman's *Histoire des Juifs de France* I was convinced that he was working on this subject and that his bitter attack proceeded from the fact, that Berman, ignorant of the tremendous difficulties in regard to preliminary source-studies, tried to sell history in a pretentious and most shallow book.

Robert Anchel's study is not and does not pretend to be a complete history of the Jews in France. In an interesting introduction the author insists on how much unraveling remains to be done in regard to the sources, if a history of the Jews in France is to be written. And that is the reason why *Les Juifs de France* constitutes but a collection of nine subjects, all of them treated in an original manner, all of them stimulating and inspiring. Some titles may be quoted: "The Jews from the origin of French Jewry to the Crusades," "Jewish Toponymy," "Ancient Jewish Quarters in Paris," "The Economic Life of the Jews of Metz," "Marranos and Judaizers."

The fifth chapter, which bears the paradoxical title, "Tolerance in the Middle Ages," seems to me too far fetched and appears as a kind of historical jugglery. Tolerance, (and the author is well aware of this fact) has a connotation of unselfish indulgence, while in the Middle Ages the attitude of both the ecclesiastical as well as the secular authorities toward the Jews was anything but disinterested.

Anchel's book, written in an elegant style by a conscientious historian, fills a gap and will be highly welcomed.

CAMILLE DREYFUS

BOOKS RECEIVED

SCRIPTURAL PSYCHIATRY, by Morris Braude, discusses references to mental ailments in the Bible and Jewish lore. 159 pp. with index. Froben Press, New York, 1946. $5.00.

COMMUNAL SICK CARE IN THE GERMAN GHETTO, by Jacob R. Marcus, gives the origin and development of institutions for the care of the sick in the German lands during the Middle Ages and down to the year 1800, with 16 appendices, bibliography and index. xiii + 335 pp. The Hebrew Union College Press, Cincinnati, 1947. $2.50.

CORRESPONDENCE

The Motivation for Britain's Present Palestine Policy

Sirs:

The following catastrophe is being called to your attention because you have not been afraid to think and act with courage.

The New York *Times* of December 13th criticized the failure of the five-nation Palestine Commission to begin its functions immediately as was intended by the UN Ad Hoc Palestine Committee.

I refer to their article on page 6 which says:

"Speaking for the Secretariat, the top official said that 'Our hands are tied' when it came to the job of recruiting most of the staff members that may be needed to service the Palestine Commission, for the wishes of the commission's members must be taken into consideration before the accompanying staff can be appointed. . . .

"The unexpected lag has been compounded even more . . . by a surprise announcement from London that Britain does not want the Palestine Commission to visit the Holy Land until just shortly before the Mandate terminates, probably May 15th.

". . . Despite the Secretariat's desire to get things moving quickly, the British feel that the Commission would only prove *'embarrassing* (Italics ours) during the delicate period prior to the administration exchange."

Let's look at the record for the reason why Britain would be "embarrassed" if the U.N. Commission were in Palestine now. Some people entertain the mistaken notion that Britain is opposed to partition. Partition, at the outset, was a British invention. She has resorted to partition schemes for centuries; more recently in South Africa, India, Iceland. "Divide and Rule."

The 1922 Trans-Jordan memorandum was a British partition scheme. In 1937 Britain's Peel Commission recommended the further partition of Palestine. The 1939 "White" Paper was a partition scheme that Britain did not hesitate to illegally "impose with force." In 1946 Britain's Mr. Bevin recommanded through Mr. Morrison partition of Palestine. Without exception each and every British colony and dominion voted in favor of UNSCOP's partition scheme. The United Kingdom herself merely abstained from openly registering her vote. Britain is not opposed to the partition of Palestine or any other region she seeks to dominate.

But there are provisions in the final Palestine Partition Plan to which she is definitely opposed. She is opposed to any provisions or conditions that will enable "economic union" to work. Britain fears that if "economic union" works in Palestine it will be adopted elsewhere. This partition precedent was included by the UNSCOP to enable the divided areas to exist from an economic and military standpoint—free of British domination.

Britain has always been ready to impose—by force—any partition scheme that would enable her to retain dominion of the partitioned areas or divided peoples, as a whole.

The success of Britain's partition scheme depends upon two essential points: (1) the area must be divided and sub-divided, into anomalies with impractical and ridiculous boundaries; and (2) the peoples in these uncomfortable areas must be again subdivided by injecting them with hate and fear of each other.

The partition of the land and of the population of Palestine is almost complete.

Point 1 — The crazy-quilt boundaries—have now been imposed upon Palestine.

Point 2 — Operation Mufti — is succeeding according to British plan. Incendiaries are injecting hate and murder to divide the Jews and the Arabs.

Jerusalem is "forsaken" and completely surrounded for miles in depth by the Arab State of Palestine. Palestine Arabs living in any parts of their State are able to reach Jerusalem without passing through a Jewish tentacle. But—Jews living in any of their corridor-connected pendants must pass through at least one of the Arab provinces of Palestine to reach Jerusalem.

This course would still be tolerable if a working economic union would enable Jews to overcome these almost insurmountable obstacles.

The "economic union" as proposed by the UNSCOP's original report was meaningless (as were many of their other vague and indefinite recommendations). Neither state was bound by the suggestions of the committee on economic union. On the contrary, each state was given a veto power to destroy the purpose of the union's existence.

But—to Britain's dismay—the Ad Hoc Committee closed many of these loopholes and removed some of the pitfalls.

The Ad Hoc Committee said it was of utmost importance for a favorable Interim Committee to go to Palestine immediately after the UN adopted the partition plan; this would prevent further strife and bloodshed in the Holy Land, and enable the committee to gather the information necessary to establish the Jewish and Arab States. They would thus be readied to receive the state powers to be transferred to them when Britain leaves.

It was anticipated that such a committee would fly to Palestine and reach the Arab peoples before the returning Arab UN delegates with their anti-partition plans. The

Committee was also empowered to correct any inequitable or impractical boundary lines. The Jewish Agency made many concessions as to boundary lines, etc., in order to rush the approval of any partition plan which would hurry such a committee on its way to Palestine.

The Ad Hoc Committee therefore named Guatemala, Uruguay, Holland, Norway and Iceland to constitute the Interim Committee. These countries, without reservation, honestly and conscientiously worked and consistently voted for the establishment of a Jewish State. (Only those countries that favored the Partition Plan were eligible to serve as members of this most important committee.) Two of the countries, Guatemala and Uruguay, had served on the UNSCOP Committee. They had months of advance study of Palestine's problems.

But—at the last moment, Britain's puppet the Moslem State of Pakistan made what appeared to be a harmless amendment. In spite of her vicious opposition to the establishment of a Jewish State, she succeeded in having the names of the Committee deleted and the appointment of this committee was left for selection by the chairman of the UN.

Immediately after the partition plan was adopted by the UN, the Chairman read a picked slate for membership to the Committee, to wit, Bolivia, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Panama and the Philippines. Not a single one of the original members recommended by the Ad Hoc Committee was appointed. On the contrary, with the exception of Czechoslovakia, the countries appointed were either lukewarm or had opposed, until the last moment, the establishment of a Jewish State.

Instead of going to Palestine immediately as the Ad Hoc Committee has recommended, they apparently do not intend to go to Palestine until May, 1948, because *Britain* does not want them there during the time she is completing her sabotage plans.

Bevin is attempting to outdo Pontius Pilate and succeed where Hitler failed. Bevin believes that the new seeds of anti-Semitism he is injecting will divide the Jews and Arabs in the Middle East equally as well and as long as the Jews and Christians throughout the rest of the world have been divided. He aims to destroy "Economic Union" and thereby liquidate Zionism.

If explanations and appeals to reason have done little to remove rooted anti-Semitism, they will do even less to remove this new form of hatred between Jews and Arabs because of the high illiteracy rate among the Arabs. Arab passions will be inflamed every Friday when they visit their Mosques. Like the crusaders of old, they will go forth with the Koran in one hand and a gun in the other because they will be led to believe that it is a sin *not* to kill the "wandering" Jew.

You may recall that the British returned the Mufti to Palestine. They succeeded in having an Arab Holy War declared against the Jews. Appeals to the "intelligence" of Arabs in the future will be futile in the face of a *Jihad* unless we expose Britain's scheme; *before the Jihad is taught to children* and becomes rooted in the Arab minds like the Crucifixion story.

We must not be guilty of failing to do that which our ancestors might have done 1,900 years ago. The "Bevin-Arab-Mufti" scheme gives civilization the opportunity to prove how and why, certain aspects, at least, of the Crucifixion story were invented and kept alive. If the foregoing and surrounding facts are adequately publicized, an informed public opinion can be aroused and channelized into action, to prevent Britain from aborting the "viable" Jewish State. Exposure will defeat the plan of the knaves and compel them to release their quarry. Only thereby can we prevent the continued bloodshed in Palestine.

SOL. A. DANN

On Calling Women to the Reading of the Torah*

Sirs:

Robert Gordis' article, "Simhat Torah—A Triumph of the Democratic Spirit," in *The Reconstructionist* of October 3, 1947, is, in my opinion, a tragic example of the inadequacy and indecisiveness which prevail in the thinking of so many Jewish religious leaders. He sings a paean to the "democratic spirit," and shows how it is contained in a characteristic Jewish festival; but when he seeks to extend this spirit to our own synagogue procedure, his stand is weak and vacillating.

If it is admitted that the discrimination against women in public worship is in opposition to the spirit of genuine democracy, as well as being destructive of our own religious ideals, then why not take the bull by the horns and demand *complete* equality for all within the walls of the synagogue? How much more vigorously should this be done when, as Dr. Gordis himself points out, there is no basis in Jewish law for the continuance of such discriminatory practices as refusal to call women to the reading of the Torah. To our very great disappointment the rabbi fails to draw conclusions consistent with his stated premises.

The suggestion that women be called to the Torah only once a year, and then not individu-

* This letter was sent to use shortly after Simhat Torah. Because of limited space and the urgency of some of our other correspondence, we were unable to publish it at the time. It raises, however, an important issue which is relevant beyond the occasion that called it forth and should continue to interest the reader.

ally or in pairs in the same manner as the male congregants, but under a catch-all *"vekol hanashim"* is nothing short of insult. Apparently at best we can only bring ourselves to toss a few crumbs to women and in so doing hope to salve our uneasy "democratic consciences." Such a practice, by drawing a clear distinction between the prerogatives of male and female within the synagogue is inevitably designed to prolong the degrading category which includes women, children, and the physically, mentally or legally incompetent. Dignified women will refuse to accept such a status. Wise and democratic men would refuse to permit it.

Those of us who love traditional Judaism and seek to strengthen it have consistently failed to face the facts. We pay lip service to ideals of change and adjustment, proclaim the need for "reconstruction" within Jewish practice, and usually come forth with such abortive attempts as the proposal under discussion. The usual excuse (and I have no doubt that Dr. Gordis also uses it) is that one must change gradually else the entire structure may be upset. Ordinarily this is a mere cover-up for confusion and indecision. Such confusion and indecision reaches its highest (or lowest) point when men of the highest standing and ability like Dr. Gordis refuse to take a firm stand on a crucial issue. If we can't do better than this on issues where Jewish law expressly permits the desired change, what can we expect in those situations where the demands of the times require us to oppose the law? Perhaps the measure of our inadequacy is best noted in the fact that the rabbis of earlier centuries were willing (as Dr. Gordis points out) even to contradict Halakah for the "honor of the Torah," while our present day rabbis lack the courage even to act as Halakhah permits, though the very preservation of the Torah requires it.

Only if such men as Dr. Gordis take their own views to heart and act on them in a vigorous and forthright manner can we hope to revive the seriously ailing Jewish spirit.

MARVIN FOX

REALITIES AND VALUES

(*Continued from Page* 9)

to conform with the modern scientific and philosophic outlook of the congregation.

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DR. EDWARD LODGE CURRAN, a Brooklyn pastor and president of the International Truth Society instituted a suit to prohibit the United Nations from taking over its Manhattan headquarters. His ground was that New York City has no right to convey any of its property to a "foreign sovereignty."

The case was recently dismissed by Justice L. Barron Hill of the New York Supreme Court who declared that the UN did not constitute a "foreign sovereignty," that the State Department had recognized the UN, and that suit would embarrass the United States before the world, if it were permitted to proceed.

We are profoundly interested in the implications of Justice Hill's declaration. It implies that any international authorty in which the United States participates cannot rightly be regarded as a foreign power. That is an important and, in our opinion, a sound doctrine. Its pronouncement is a well-directed blow against a resurgent American isolationism.

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NOT ALL ROGUES ARE IN PRISON and not all who are in prison are unmitigated rogues.

The truth of the latter part of this statement has been demonstrated recently by the inmates of San Quentin Prison in California. As reported by the *Religious News Service* of January 1, 1948, the convicts learned that prison employees were planning to gather clothes for the needy abroad. They thereupon decided to donate on their part the clothes that they had worn when first committed to the prison.

Six thousand pounds of clothing were thus donated for distribution through the agency of World Church Service.